

A Brand New Adventure

by Iridescent Isabelle

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Summary: Dominic and Isabelle find themselves in an entirely foreign place in unfamiliar bodies. They've been turned into a Houndoom and a Persian. As long as they stick together, the two should be fine in this entirely new world. (Blue/Red Rescue Team story)

## 1. Tiny Woods

In the shadows under the trees, two PokÃ©mon lay sleeping. The Houndoom's deep breaths rocked the Persian up and down that laid with her head on his torso. The two looked entirely peaceful, but they would not be for long.

>As if bitten, the Houndoom's eyes shot open and he leapt up to his paws, causing the Persian to fall and wake up as well, hissing in annoyance. Oddly enough, the Houndoom could not keep his balance on his four paws and fell to the ground with a grunt.<br>"What did you do that for?" The Persian asked with her ears flicked back, still sore about being woken in such a way.

>"Where are we?" The Houndoom inquired in a male voice. Persian looked around her, only just realising they were not where they had fallen asleep.<br>"Better question: what happened to us?" She had seemingly just realised she was a Persian. Next to her, the Houndoom came to the same conclusion.

>"Izz, you're a Persian! What am I?"<br>"A Houndour? No, a Houndoom. Definitely a Houndoom. What happened? Why do we look this way?"

>Taking a few wobbly steps, the Houndoom pressed his snout against hers.<br>"Don't worry, Izz. We'll be okay. Come on, let's get up and explore this place. We're PokÃ©mon now. Nothing can harm us! I'll defend you. I should know Flamethrower!" With that, he tried to shoot a mighty Flamethrower like he had seen Fire-types do when he was still a human. However, he didn't get more than a few sparks. Behind him, Isabelle laughed as she worked herself to her dainty paws.

>"You should start with Tackle, Dom," she said teasingly as she passed him, stroking the side of his body with her tail. "Come on.

Let's go!"<p>

Together, they walked through the forest. The grass felt delightful under their paws. Like two PokÃ©mon in love, they pounced each other, trying to topple the other over. This effect was increased by the instability in their legs as they grew used to them. Playing and laughing, they increased their skills in running and leaping, trying to dodge the other's attacks. For a while, they were able to forget their worries, such as how all this happened, and just enjoy themselves while it lasted.

>"Excuse me?" A thin, high-pitched voice asked, distracting Dominic which allowed Isabelle to take him down to the ground. As she sat on top of him purring, she looked at the one who spoke. It was a Butterfree, fluttering above them.<br>"Yes? Ah!" The Persian cried out when the Houndoom pushed her off, causing her to fall on her back gracelessly. Dominic, the ruffian, just snickered.

>"You two look really strong, being fully evolved. I need your help. Caterpie is missing! He went into the woods and never came back!"<br>"Oh no!" Isabelle said, sitting down in front of the fluttering Butterfree. Dominic soon joined her, rewarded with a feline muzzle beneath his slightly higher head. "What do you think happened to him?"

>"He probably got scared because of all the PokÃ©mon there. Oh, please, can you look for him and escort him back? He's only just a baby."<br>Before Dominic could open his mouth about letting a baby out of sight, Isabelle accepted the request: "Don't worry, ma'am. We'll go look for Caterpie. We can't promise anything, though. We're not very familiar with all the corners of the Forest."

Grudgingly, Houndoom followed the Persian as they headed deeper into the woods, looking for some Caterpie.

>"Why are we doing this?" He asked, sullen as a Fire-type.<br>"Because it feels good to do good!" Persian proclaimed, glaring a little at her mate.

For a while, they wandered the forest, asking helpful Pidgey whether they had seen a Caterpie, allowing Dom to chase the not-very-helpful Pidgey. A Wurmple sought to pick a fight with the Persian, but she just pushed it away with a flick of her paw. She didn't even use her claws for it, not wishing to actually harm them. On the background, Houndoom had way too much fun chasing a particularly gutsy Pidgey around, leaping and biting at it. Because they'd only been PokÃ©mon for a few hours, he couldn't leap as high as he should. Their muscles weren't as strong as they should be, so lots of exercise was imminent.

Eventually, they found Caterpie. He was being bullied by Exeggcute, surrounded by all six eggs. They kept asking him questions till the point they made Caterpie cry.

"Oi, you." Dominic growled, changing from the complaining, teasing dog to the protective Houndoom. He looked hot, and it wasn't just because he was a Fire-type. "Stay away from Caterpie."

"Oh? Oh? Oh?" They asked, each egghead repeating the word. "What's it to you?"

"We've come to pick Caterpie up. So get out!" He roared at them. Two of the eggs flinched, but the others weren't impressed.

"If you want him, you gotta battle us for 'im!"

Behind Houndoom, Persian unsheathed her claws, getting ready to fight. "You fight, I protect Caterpie," she told him quietly. He merely nodded once, tensely. Then the fight started.

Immediately, Isabelle took a mighty leap and leapt over the Exeggute, standing over Caterpie. The little, green worm understood what they were doing and he crawled up her left, front paw to hide in her scruff. Meanwhile, Dominic was swiping at the eggs, biting them and flinging them all over the place.

"If they use a Psychic attack, don't look!" Persian warned, although Houndoom already knew this. The eggs, however, weren't very strong. They appeared to be more talk than actions, since they stopped moving after being swiped away and separated. Leaving them laying there, Houndoom and Persian broke out in a run. Isabelle ran carefully, trying not to rock too much with her precious burden on her back, while Dominic stayed close to her, keeping a watchful eye on any PokÃ©mon that might come near them and threaten them. Luckily, no one was foolish enough to try it.

Within no time, they left the dense area of the forest, heading back to the meadow where they played earlier. The memory made Persian smile. Butterfree was still there, and Caterpie on her back started squealing at the sight of his mother.

"Oh, you heroes! You found him! My baby! Oh, please, take these. I insist!" She offered the two PokÃ©mon, who secretly were quite out of breath from running in a majestic manner, a Pecha and a Oran berry. "To help you further. Yet again, thank you so much. I'll tell everyone in town about you." Just as she was about to flutter away, Caterpie nudged her. "Oh, that's right. If you need a place to stay, there's a hut in the outskirts of town that isn't being used. I'm sure you can stay there."

Thanking the Butterfree, the two watched her flutter away. Then Persian gave Houndoom a sly look and ran ahead to where the hut was supposed to be. It looked rather shabby, but that could just be the influence of the setting sun. Inside, a very soft straw bed was made, big enough for two. To test it, Persian leapt onto it and rolled, purring in delight.

Houndoom entered calmly as if he owned the place, watching his mate roll on her back on the bed.

"Now, where were we before we were interrupted for heroics?" He said in a low, growly voice.

"Somewhere around here," Persian said, nuzzling her muzzle against his as he laid down next to her. It soon became too dark to see, but the two didn't need their eyes as they found out how to sleep together in their new bodies on a straw bed.

## 2. Thunderwave Cave

The sun shining through the windows is what woke Persian from her sleep. She was curled up against Houndoom like yesterday morning. Looking down at her paws, she noticed she was still a PokÃ©mon. So

yesterday, when the pair had rescued Caterpie from the forest, hadn't been a dream. Gazing up at Dominic's sleeping face affectionately, she was kind of happy it wasn't. Being PokÃ©mon with him was terribly exciting. She got off the straw bed and stretched her muscles. Behind her came a pleased growl.

>"Hello kitty!"<br>Amused, Persian looked over her shoulder at a lounging Houndoom who gazed upon his mate approvingly. "Good morning to you, too. Were you peeking? Because if you were, I'll â€œ"

>"Excuse me!" A static-y voice called out, making Isabelle sigh and Dom groan. Things were just about to get exciting.<br>"Who is it?" Houndoom asked gruffly. His voice was so growly early in the morning.

>"Magnemite! Are you the two who rescued Caterpie?"<br>"We are. Give us a moment, we'll come out soon!" Persian called out, before rubbing her snout against the annoyed Fire-type. "Haven't you had enough last night?"

>"Not nearly," he growled back, nipping her ear.<br>"Greedy, aren't you?"

>"Only for you, my gorgeous mate."<br>She grinned at him before sauntering out of the hut, after wincing at the actual state of the hut. They'd have to hire some workers to fix this place up if they planned on staying longer.

>The bright sunlight blinded Persian for a moment before she was able to see the Magnemite floating next to their mailbox. As she chatted with him about the weather and about Caterpie, Dominic joined her, grumbling and growling. He definitely was not a happy dog in the morning.<br>"So, what's up?" He asked, harsher than he should, causing Isabelle to nudge him with a warning look.

>"I need your help. My brother Magnemite is lost in Thunderwave Cave!"<br>"Oh no!" Izzy said. "What do you think happened to him?"

>"He went there yesterday, chattering about this gorgeous girl-Magnemite he had met. They would have a date there, you see? But he never came back!" His only eye started tearing up.<br>Isabelle laid her paw on Magnemite's headâ€œ body... on him, at least. "Don't worry. We'll go look for the Magnemite. Say, if we find him, could you get someone to fix our roof for us, for our effort?"

>"Sure! I'll do anything if you get my brother back!"<p>

Growling like some annoyed cat, Dominic followed his mate to the entrance of the cave. Persian didn't pay him much mind. He was just upset he was woken up early. Once they'd get into the cave, defending themselves from PokÃ©mon who thought they were intruders, he'd wake up fully.

>The Thunderwave Cave seemed much bigger than yesterday's woods had been. The air was charged with electricity, hinting at the many electric types that live in these caves, yet in the shallow part of the cave, they merely had to chase away Rattata, Nidoran, and Poochyena. No matter how bravely the Rattata came to Isabelle, as a Persian, she merely had to hiss at them before they ran away frightened. The Poochyena were fiercely territorial and would make loud, echoing barks, but one harsh Bite from Houndoom and they fled, whimpering.<br>The two walked through the caves without feeling terribly harassed. It became darker as they went deeper, so Dom trusted on Izzy's night vision as he practiced an Ember attack, coughing up fireballs. By the time they arrived at the level where the Electric types roamed, Dom could launch a decent Ember attack. It made Izzy a bit jealous that she was merely Normal type. No awesome attacks for her. Just Tackling and Scratching and stuff like that. On

the other hand, she could see where she was going and Dominic had to rely on following the soft scent of his companion.

>No matter how grumpy her Houndoom was in the morning, he would always be brave when it mattered. When they encountered a Voltorb that spotted them and got ready to self-destruct, he Head-butted it with his horns, sending it flying into an unfortunate Elekid.<br>Occasionally, they would spot a Plusle or a Minun.

Isabelle thought they were adorable, but they did cause the most annoying static shocks whenever she touched them, causing her to have to lie down as her body trembled, paralysed from their shocks. When she did so, Dominic would settle at her side, sniffing the air and resting his head against her soothingly. After that, she didn't find them as cute anymore and vowed to Bite them hard when she saw one of them again, no matter the consequences. At this Houndoom was merely amused, even rather proud of his determined mate. He seemed to find her antics attractive.

>Of course, the Magnemite had gotten themselves to the deepest part of the cave. Why not stay near the entrance? When the two reached the Magnemite, Isabelle could not contain a surprised shriek of laughter. No matter what they had been doing, but they seemed to have gotten fused together in some sort of half-evolution towards

Magneton.<br>"You know, Dom, we could just push them back like this. I'm sure his younger brother would love to see what "playing" means to these two." This caused angry static sounds from the two Magnemite, who were obviously agitated from being stuck in such a degrading position.

>"How evil, my dear Izzy. Let's free them. I don't feel like pushing them all the way back. If we free them, they can fly on their own." Persian agreed with that, and with their teeth, they pulled until they both fell over as the Magnemite separated with a loud 'pop'.<p>

Back at the hut that was now Dom and Izzy's, the Magnemite was waiting for them. It began hovering up and down in joy when he saw his brother back.

>"You did it! You found them! Oh, I'm so happy! What had happened?"<br>Dominic coughed. "That's a long story. Maybe for another time. These two probably didn't sleep all night, and are exhausted and hungry, aren't you?" The two embarrassed Magnemite nodded quickly.

>"Oh, you guys are heroes. I'll go make the preparations at once. Tomorrow night, or maybe even tonight, you'll sleep under a fixed roof!" And with that, the young Magnemite flew away. The male Magnemite that had been saved turned to the two quadruples.<br>"Thanks. For rescuing us, and not telling him. That was â€œ humiliating."

>Dom grinned at him. "Don't worry about it. Be safe and be careful, next time."<br>"Heh. Yeah, thanks."

>Persian rolled her eyes as she headed back inside, planning on an afternoon nap. It'd been an exciting morning. Houndoom entered as well, still chuckling.<br>"They left. That was fun." He laid down next to her. "So, what's up with the roof fixing?"

>"Well," she said as if it were entirely obvious. "I don't like to be rained on as I sleep, and since you're a Fire-type, neither do you." She then rolled over, away from him.<br>"Aww, baby, don't be like that. You're jealous that I get awesome fire attacks? Don't be. I don't want any other than you, and besides, I know how to make you hot." Such a tacky line made Persian laugh. "No, really. I think you're amazing. You're hardly weak to anything. I think you're very special," he told her in his gruff voice that she had grown to love.

Snuggled against each other, they took a nap in the warm, afternoon sun that shone through their windows and the holes in their roof.

### 3. Pokemon Square

\*\*Pokemon Square.\*\*

After their nap, Persian snuck a look out of the window to check whether someone stood in front of their door to demand their time. Unfortunately, there was. A few Geodude hovered in front of their house. Interestingly enough, they had tool boxes and bales of hay with them. After stretching, Isabelle went to meet them outside.

"Hello. How can I help you?"

"Good day, miss. We've come to fix your roof. Is this Persian and Houndoom's hut?"

Persian purred and nodded. "That it is. Be welcome. Would you like us out or around while you work?"

"We'd prefer out, actually, to prevent accidents. You see, miss, we're very hard, so we'll be okay if something happens, but for your safety, it might be better if you were out." Houndoom exited the hut as well. Geodude nodded his head at him. "Sir. I just explained to Persian â€œ"

"I heard what you said. In case you hadn't noticed, we do not have a door or anything, so voice travels easily." Dom replied gruffly.

Persian smiled softly at the two builders. "Don't mind him. He's annoyed we've been woken early this morning by someone who needed our help."

The Geodude had flinched at Houndoom's growl, but relaxed when Izzy spoke. "Have you been to the Pokemon Square yet? I was told you're new, so you might not have been there yet. It's right out here, to the right. Keep on going, over the river. Can't miss it."

"Thanks! We'll do that. Come on, Dominic." Persian nudged him into movement and off they went.

The Pokemon Square was a really neat little place. The stones of the square itself were laid tidily. If this was done by the same Geodude who were now fixing their place, then Izzy had all faith that their building improvements would go well.

There was an adorable little shop managed by Kecleon, one of which was a fabulous shade of purple. A Wigglytuff was promoting her friendship club. A Kangaskhan had a storage service. Ahead, on a hill, many Pelliper flew out, delivering letters. They had a really neat building, shaped like a Pelliper's beak.

As Dominic headed off to talk to the Makuhita in front of his Dojo, Isabelle approached the regal Persian who held the bank. At first, he didn't look at her since she looked rather scruffy from not having

groomed since coming back from the Thundershock Rock or whatever that place was called, but then he noticed she was one of his kind.

"Well, hello therrrre. Look at you, gorrrgeous." He purred at her.

"H-hello," Isabelle replied, instantly shy. He looked more gorgeous than she did; his fur was perfect, his whiskers of equal length, and his paws well-maintained. There was something about him that made her really bashful.

"You're the first Persian I've seen here besides myself. If you'd like, I can show you my place tonight. I've got some excellent fish that I'm sure you'll like."

"Touch her with one paw and I'll kill you," a growl came from behind Izzy, causing her to jump in surprise. A furious Houndoom came stalking close. He rose onto his hind legs and placed his paws on the counter of the bank. "She's mine, furball. Back off."

The Persian pulled up his nose, distastefully for the rough-looking dog. "Really?" He asked Izzy, totally ignoring the flaming male in front of him. "You're with that? I can smell you all over him. How low you've fallen. No wonder you look so shaggy. He couldn't even groom a Slowpoke."

Dom snarled at the Persian. Since they were making quite a scene, Izzy gently yanked on his tail with her teeth, pulling him off the counter. "Come on, Dom. It's not worth it." She pushed him away, back to their hut.

"When you're done playing around with that doggie, come see me, gorgeous. I'll show you how it's really done! You'll never want to go back." The banker Persian called out, causing Houndoom to roar in anger. Many of the PokÃ©mon on the square flinched in fear, but Izzy kept pushing her mate away to prevent a fight and to have him cool his anger.

Once they were away from the outskirts of the town, Dom's anger was replaced with sulky, simmering annoyance. He was not at all impressed with the Persian from town, who he called an over-preened, treacherous little slimeball. Izzy calmed him by pressing into his side.

"Tell me about what you saw, darling." She cooed, placatingly. It took the edge off his irritation and he glanced across at her, keeping his apparent jealous rage in check.

"I went down to a Dojo on the edge of town. It's a little way along a path, which is why I took a little while getting back to you. It's run by a Makuhita, he says that beneath the building there's mazes. Perhaps, we can go there sometime."

Dominic had still been struggling to launch his flamethrower, after all, but he grinned wickedly at his partner. "You know, in case you want to learn how to use Swift or something."

Izzy nipped him at his haunches, then pounced him, knocking him clear from the path to where they landed in a small, shallow ditch. She was

atop him, which he did not mind nearly as much as her aggression might have implied.

#### 4. Mt Steel: part 1

##### \*\*Mt Steel: part 1\*\*

The following morning, Persian awoke to the sensation of the ground rumbling. Her entire body was sore from last night. Houndoom had been too worked up to sleep, so they had returned to the woods where they rescued Caterpie and ran next to each other for hours. It had gone dark but that hadn't stopped the two. Persian had night sight and Houndoom was fuming fire. No matter how much her muscles were burning, Izzy did not stop running. She was loyal like that. As a result, though, everything hurt this morning.

Sitting in the arch that acted as a door frame, Persian watched the Dugtrio in front of their house, pacing back and forth. After his fourth time passing her, she decided to speak up.

"Can I help you?"

She decided to keep her voice low, to allow Houndoom to sleep more. The poor guy looked like he needed it. He was entirely out cold, snoring so hard he scorched the hay a little.

The Dugtrio saw the sleeping Houndoom as well and rightfully thought it was a bad idea to wake him up.

"I need your help. Diglett is kidnapped. A Skarmory just flew by and grabbed him and flew all the way to the top of Mt Steel!" One of his smaller heads got tears in his eyes.

"Don't worry. We'll go look for Diglett. If we succeed, could you and your kin plough our garden for us?" Persian referred to the barren, rock littered dirt that surrounded their hut. "I'd like to make this place look better. More like home."

"Consider it done. As soon as Diglett is back, I'll bring everyone over and we'll have your garden ploughed in no time," said the tallest head of Dugtrio.

Isabelle nodded. "All right. We'll leave in an hour. Mt Steel seems pretty big so it might take us most of the day. I'll go into town and stock up on food."

Leaving a note with a paw print on it for Houndoom, she left to walk the small distance into town.

In town, Isabelle first went to the Kecleon shop. There, she purchased some apples and berries with the money she'd found in the Thundershock Rock or what that place might have been called. With a pouch considerably filled, she headed over to the Pelliper Post office to check the job offer board. While they're going to Mt Steel, might check if someone else needed anything there, too. As she walked past, she felt the banker's eyes on her. She realised she must look very bad. After Dominic's anger from last night, here she was, walking with some difficulty because she was so sore. Still, she held her head up, totally ignoring him.

At the board, a Pidgey hung up a notice. As she came close, the bird flinched a little but Izzy pretended not to notice as she read the notice. Pidgey apparently needed someone to bring some sort of gummi to Spearow in the lower levels of Mt Steel.

"Hey. Would you like me to do that for you? I'm going there anyway," she said in her kindest voice possible.

"Y-You would? T-that would be most kind, miss," the bird tweeted.

"Please, don't be scared. I'm not going to eat you. I had an apple for breakfast."

The Pidgey gave her a tiny smile and handed her a little box with the gummi and a note for Spearow.

"Thank you. I'll come and find you here tomorrow morning with the reply?" The bird nodded. "All right. See you then!" Then Persian headed home again, yet again not looking at Persian, who meowed at her.

Dominic was delighted at having all that bed to himself. That wasn't to say it was better than with his Persian in it. It wasn't. That said, when he was alone there was nobody to pull at his ear, trying to get him to wake up. It was a warming thought. He let his eyes drift closed, stretching out into a long, limp, black mass. Half sleeping, he didn't hear the scuffle of paws at the doorstep or smell the approaching PokÃ©mon. The PokÃ©mon approached, and started snuffling curiously around Dominic's bed, which caused the Houndoom to go from unaware of the outsider to very aware of it, all in a single heartbeat. He spun around, finding his feet quickly and dropping his front forward into a low, snarling stance.

His eyes alighted not upon a vicious, vile assailant. In fact, if Dominic had pounced, he'd likely have soared straight over the small, very young Poochyena that stood looking at Houndoom with wide eyes. It looked back at Dominic for a moment, then dropped into a perfect mirror position and started to growl. Dominic bit back a laugh at the high pitched little noise and straightened up, but the pup was having none of it. He launched himself, swiping against Dominic's forepaw and trying to bite it. The little one's mouth barely worked yet, and Dominic stepped aside once, then twice, to send the pup sprawling.

Dominic tired of the game quickly and, after quickly looking that his partner was not around to chastise him, knocked the Poochyena with his muzzle. The smaller PokÃ©mon sprawled onto his back, where he was easily pinned with even the laziest of efforts.

"Who are you? Are you someone else looking for help? It's really my partner that deals with that sort of thing." He permitted himself a brief, wicked grin that was all fangs outlined with the fire that bubbled deep in his throat. "Better people-skills."

"Yes! I mean... No! Well, yes, but not like you did for that Magnemite!" He was struggling and straining to get up. Dominic had to admire his energy but he wasn't going anywhere just yet. Poochyena dropped back and flopped, his paws up alongside his head, looking

pitiful. "I wanna join you! I want to be as big and fierce as you are!"

Dominic canted an eyebrow. He let up his paw and moved to lay back down in his familiar spot, head propped so that he could both see the Poochyena and revel in the scent of his feline love. "As fierce as me, hmm? Takes a lot of hard work to get there! How did you find us, anyway?"

"Well, uhm, first I saw you in the caves and then I tried to follow you but, uh, you're really really fast. So I was lost in the forest for a bit but then, last night, I saw you and, uhm, the Persian lady, running around. I managed to follow you back but it took ages and ages. I was gonna come a little bit ago but uhm..." The Poochyena, who'd been speaking with the speed and enthusiasm only youth enabled, fell suddenly quiet and started to twist a forepaw into the ground. "Well... The Persian lady makes me a bit nervous, kinda."

Dominic let out a loud peal of laughter that lingered as a grin. "Does she now? Maybe you've more sense than you look. Let's wait until the Persian lady is back and see what she says. As long as you're careful, I don't see why you can't come along with us."

Persian returned to find Dominic talking to the tiniest Poochyena she had ever seen. She waited in the doorframe until either of them noticed her. It was her Houndoom who first spotted her. He stood up from the bed to nuzzle her face affectionately.

"So, who's this?"

The Poochyena squeaked in fear but was shoved forward by Houndoom.

"I-I'm Poochyena! I.. I'd like to join you guys." From the amused expression on Dom's face, he acted much differently when she wasn't here.

"Do you now? Why?"

"When I'm a Mightyena, I want to be as fierce as Houndoom is, ma'am!"

Only Houndoom knew she had a soft spot for young PokÃ©mon and would never reject one.

"All right." Persian said, faking a sigh. "But don't get in our way. Dominic, you're in charge of his training." Barking her orders, she turned her tail and set out, towards Mt Steel.

## 5. Mt Steel: Part 2

\*\*Mt Steel: part 2\*\*

The expanded team headed into the cave opening that would allow them access into Mt Steel. Persian lead the team with Houndoom and Poochyena behind her. The excited yipping of the puppy was starting to get a bit on her nerves, and they were only on the first floor.

Dominic was having a hard time moving around the mountain caves, because wherever he tried to put a paw, there was a Poochyena beneath it. The pup somehow always managed to get out before Dom stumbled - and before Poochyena got flattened! - but there were more than a few near misses.

This continued until, after Dom almost stumbled yet again, he dug his teeth into the scruff of Poochyena's neck and tossed him forward. This made Persian smile, knowing that the little thing didn't get on her nerves only. Dominic growled at Poochyena, who promptly went from bounding around and getting in the way, to cowering and whimpering softly, remembering the Bite he'd gotten when they first met.

"We brought you to help, little pup. You don't grow up big and strong without making yourself useful." Poochyena watched closely, then shifted his paws together to stand up as tall as his little body allowed. He still didn't reach their shoulders, though. Poochyena growled and grumbled a little petulantly, but he did walk a little more properly after that. Dominic strutted past Persian with a proud little grin.

While the two talked, Isabelle looked around for the Spearow she was supposed to deliver something to. The description the female Pidgey had given wasn't very useful; he was supposed to be the handsomest of all Spearow. He could be anywhere on the first four floors, so they continued upwards. When Poochyena ran a bit ahead, barking at a Spearow, though not the one Izzy was after, Izzy spoke softly to Dom.

"Are you sure you know what you're doing? I'd hate to see the cub killed."

"Killed? He'll be fine, nothing down here will do that much before I can get my jaws around it." The little flash of a grin was equal parts wicked and playful. Izzy had to suppose he was really starting to like being a Houndoom.

His attention shifted to the little Poochyena, yapping at Spearow. He strolled past Izzy and used his nose to push Poochyena forward. Now that he was closer to the Spearow his yaps grew quiet and now that Dominic was backing up the Spearow grew bold. "Go on, Pup. You can handle an itty bitty Spearow."

Poochyena looked around at Dominic and, steadied by the sight of him, turned back. He dropped his lower half forward and let out a soft, pathetic growl. Dominic sat down lazily but with his eyes keen on Poochyena, ready to instruct him through his very first, wild battle.

Spotting the Spearow she needed to deliver the package to, she had mumbled a quick 'be right back' before dashing after the bird.

"Excuse me! Hello? Excuse me!"

It seemed a pretty gutsy Spearow because unlike the others around, it did not flee when the taller feline came running.

>"Yes?" He asked rudely, puffing out his chest.<p>

"I've got a delivery for you, from Pidgey."

His entire demeanor changed. He looked strangely hopeful. "From Pidgey? What's in it? Give it to me!" He demanded.

"Calm down, I'm getting it." Isabelle missed her human hands at a time like this. It was rather hard to retrieve a package from her pouch without thumbs. Eventually, she got it though. A neatly tied box with a letter attached to it. "I'm meeting Pidgey tomorrow morning at the job offer board near Pelliper's mail office. Can you meet me there, too?"

>"Sure, sure," Spearow said, not even listening anymore. Isabelle nodded and walked away again, back to Dom and that Poochy, just in time to see his first battle. She joined her mate by laying down next to him, as unconcerned as a cat could be.<p>

Dominic turned to Persian and gave her an affectionate, if slightly wet lick along her cheek, well aware that she'd find it equal parts distasteful and endearing. As expected, he received a half frown from his feline. "Come to watch the show?" he asked in a low voice, before turning toward Poochyena. "Don't get fancy, Pup! Just wait for him to stop moving a moment, then Tackle him!"

Poochyena had been circling the Spearow, like he'd seen Mightyena do when stalking prey. The Flying-type didn't seem terribly experienced either, because it fluttered around, circling the Poochyena with neither of them ready to attack. From time to time, it landed and paused a moment, screeching aggressively. It was during one such pause that Poochyena surged forward, pouncing and twisting to put his shoulder first to do a Tackle, which he'd learned from watching both of his mentors.

Spearow hopped up and over the hapless hound with a little flutter of wings, then swooped back down to peck Poochyena's back. The young Pokemon squealed and ran as though toward Dominic, who canted an eyebrow and shook his head. Poochyena turned back around. "Come on, Pup," spoke the older canine. "You did well. Just a little faster. Save the burst of speed for when you're almost there; take it by surprise." Persian had quite an impressed look on her face, both surprised and impressed by Dominic's change in demeanor. She was really liking it.

The very next time Spearow landed, if only for a heartbeat, Poochyena darted into action. He bounded forward a couple of steps and then, all at once, leapt at the Spearow with his shoulder first. The Spearow fluttered and rose a little again, but this time it was too slow. Poochyena knocked him down and they landed in a tangle of feathers and puppy. "Nice!" came Dominic's proud yell, causing Poochyena to turn around for a proud moment, which let Spearow get away. Dominic chuckled, rose slowly to all fours, and padded toward his protege.

"Not bad, not bad at all."

"You mean it? You really mean it? I did like you said, started slow, then \_bam\_! Fast as I could! And I hit it, and it couldn't fly! Well I mean, it did after I stopped, but I could've gone again if I needed to!" The little Poochyena had found all of his energy, bounding around Dominic and, to a lesser extent, Persian happily. Dom rolled his eyes at Izzy and the two shared a little grin.

"Not bad, cub," Persian said, purring calmly as if this was nothing

to be impressed of. Can't let the cub get a bigger head than he already had. Then she gave Houndoom an affectionate rub with her head before climbing up another level of the mountain, gracefully like the cat she is.

## 6. Mt Steel: Part 3

\*\*Mt Steel: Part 3\*\*

The trio continued up the mountain, following narrow, naturally formed ramps up sometimes, and more purposely cut stairs at others. They'd been there for several hours now and gone up what felt like thousands of stairs; Poochyena had taken to riding on Dominic's back some of the way to spare his much shorter legs.

"You want up, too?" he'd offered Persian, but the feline only rolled her eyes and did not smile until she'd turned her head away from him.

Their progress was impeded by the denizens of the mountain, who were eager to waylay them. Zigzagoon and Spearow were the worst. They were so plentiful that they were constantly sweeping in to try and attacking them, or at least steal from Persian's pouch of food. Dominic would breathe embers toward them til his chest hurt and Persian would take sweeps with her clawed paws. Even Poochyena hopped down once or twice to bark away the odd opponent!

They stopped for a break after a couple of hours. They'd found a small chamber out of the way, with just two entrances and wreathed in deep enough shadow that it seemed unlikely they'd be disturbed. Poochyena immediately regained all of his strength and began running from one entrance to another, sniffing each time and peering into the shadow. Dominic used his teeth to pluck the bag from Persian and lay it out so that they could take apples from within. Persian, after dragging her apple over to herself, laid down on the floor. Unlike her canine mate, she had less stamina. Her toe beans hurt from the rocky floor of the caverns. To rest a little, she laid down on her side, stretched out, daydreaming about their wonderfully soft bed at home. Poochyena once made the mistake of leaping on top of her, earning him a fierce snarl that made the puppy whimper and hide. When tired, the Classy Cat PokÃ©mon turned rather grumpy.

Their respite was brief but much needed. Dominic felt the discomfort in his chest recede, Poochyena was ready to walk alongside them again, and Izzy was in higher spirits with some food in her. They were just about packing when, from not far above, they heard a vicious, screeching caw. Poochyena froze solid and cowered back in fear while the two older individual's exchanged worried glances.

"Do you want to stay here, Poochyena?" offered Izzy, thoughtfully. The small Pokemon certainly looked like he did, but he bravely shook his head.

"No! I'm going with you guys!" demanded the small Poochy smartly, stamping his paw into the hard rock. Dominic smiled toward his mate.

"Let him come; it'll be okay." Izzy looked slightly unconvinced, but shrugged a shoulder and nodded uncertainly. "Thank you. Now, come on,

I bet whoever made that noise is what's keeping Diglett trapped."

They padded quietly. The call seemed to have sent a lot of the smaller Pokemon into hiding. There was scant little resistance. Without much delay, they found the stairs and ascended.

This final floor was clearly at or near the top of the mountain. It was cold, and the walls tapered inward at the top where they closed toward the pinnacle of the mountain. A breeze blew in from some crevasse ahead, flurrying around and adding to the chill. Poochyena shivered but followed, dutifully. All three of them were as quiet as they could be.

On a ledge on the other side of a chasm was Diglett. The little guy was barely visible above the ground, hiding in the hole he'd dug for himself. The poor guy even seemed to be shivering but be it from cold or fear, it was unknown.

In front of the Diglett stood a massive bird. His metallic feathers shone in the dying lights of twilight. Not only did it look magnificent, it also looked very, very angry.

Skarmory screeched and, now that they were in the same room as it, the noise was ear-splitting. Poochyena yapped pointlessly into the noise and pranced backward as if he could run away from it. Dominic winced then snarled in anger, and Persian hung her head low to weather it, gracefully. Their opponent beat its enormous wings and came swooping toward them.

Poochyena leapt up and dragged his claws through the air, a long way short. Fortunately, Persian pounced it as it passed. Her claws raked across the metal, and though they did little damage, the weight of her swipe sent the bird tumbling out of its flight and caused it to crash down onto the stone with a horrible, grating sound.

"\_Move!\_" came the bellow from Dom, before he roared thick, smoky flames across the Steel-type's form. It screeched again; this time in anguish.

"That's working!" Persian called. Skarmory, though, batted a wing to knock the Ember attack aside. He was hurt, but it made him angry. It swung its head around until its beady, black eyes narrowed on Poochyena.

This time, when it attacked, it attacked hard. Its beak came slapping down, cracking the rock where Poochyena had been standing a moment before. In a heartbeat, it was doing it again, then again, swiping with everything it had at the small canine. Poochyena was hopping aside on instinct, squealing and terrified.

Both of the others were stricken with fear for their young companion. They acted in the same moment, Izzy launching herself onto Skarmory's back and pinning him down. Dominic surged forward, put his head over the fallen bird's, and let out all of the Ember flames he could manage.

Skarmory squealed and beat with all its strength, finally dislodging Izzy. She fell off and landed heavily on the ground, scraping herself on the rough rock. The bird staggered backward, wild-eyed and

terrified, then took a loping step toward the crack in the mountain; toward the cold air without. It beat its wings once, twice, and then it was launching itself into the air and away.

Now that Skarmory was defeated, Diglett could safely return home to Dugtrio. Persian had offered to take it down, but it refused, not wishing to come out of the ground.

The way down took less time. The PokÃ©mon of Mt Steel had heard the battle and now feared (or admired) the team that rushed down the mountain, eager to get out of this cold, gloomy place. Pains were forgotten, exhaustion had fled, now that it was finally time to go home.

By the time they came to their hut, they had the sorest paws they ever had in their entire life. Poochyena laid asleep on Persian's back since she was a much steadier walker than Houndoom was.

Dominic remained outside with Dugtrio and Diglett. "Thank you," chimed the triple set. "For returning our friend safe and sound. We will do as we promised, tomorrow. We'll give you the best garden around."

Dominic smiled, albeit a little faintly. He was exhausted. "That he's safe is all we need. Justâ€! Don't come too early." >While Dominic talked, Isabelle went inside to gently lay Poochy down on their pillow, to let the little guy sleep. Despite his hyperactivity, he was rather adorable. However, her wounds and exhaustion caught up with her. She sank through her trembling paws and laid on her side on the pillow, curled up around Poochy, with her injured side facing up. Blood marred her golden fur, having clotted and tangled in the fine hairs. Dominic soon joined the back of the group, his forepaw lazing over Izzy, and all three were soon fast asleep.<p>

## 7. Energetic Forest

### \*\*Energetic Forest\*\*

The morning following that intense day at Mt Steel, Persian had trouble getting out of their bed. The scrapes on her side stung heavily and her legs were cramped. The pads on her feet were cracked in some places, from walking on the rough stone all day. All in all, she felt miserable. Dominic, unusually, woke up at the stirring of his mate and looked across at her with one half-opened eye. He growled a faint noise that only she could translate: it was his way of checking whether she was well. Poochyena, curled up in front of her, was still asleep, entirely knocked out from so much excitement. Persian lifted her head at the sound and gave his chin a gentle lick. She was as stubborn as a cat and declared she was fine. Dominic seemed unconvinced but, after passing his gaze across her appraisingly, he drooped his head and tried to doze on.

Persian, however, got up from bed. It was clear that, even if the entire world started burning around her, she would not do another quest today. Snarling under her breath, she walked slowly out of the hut to eat something. Poochyena, missing Persian's warmth, climbed on Houndoom's chest and sleep asleep there, with little twitching paws as he dreamt he chased something.

After eating, Isabelle made her way over to the job offer board. She was going to meet Pidgey and Spearow quickly, take their reward, and head back home. That was today's plan.

The meeting was done soon enough. A cat in pain was not a patient one, and soon enough, Isabelle walked away with her coin pouch decently filled. However, the Banker Persian stopped her on her way home.

"What happened to you?" He asked, seemingly worried but Izzy didn't buy it.

"Some of us need to work for a living. Now let me pass." She hissed at him, laying her ears in her neck. Banker Persian growled at her.

"You're hurt! Let me get Chansey."

"I do not need Chansey. Let me through!"

"No!"

"Now, now, Persy. That's no way to talk to a lady." A high, mocking voice sounded from behind the two. Banker Persian ducked his head, snarling, and Isabelle looked toward where the sound had come from.

The daintiest of cats had approached the two of them and currently sat on the counter of the Bank. She was licking her paws to clean the imaginary filth off them. It was a Delcatty and next to her sat one of the biggest Arcanine Izzy had ever seen.

Banker Persian groaned. "Della. Keep your dainty nose out of this."

Arcanine growled. "Don't talk to her like that." The Persian flinched and backed off a little.

"Come, lady Persian. You look like you had a rough time. Please, join us. We've got some fish we'd like to share. You're new here, right?" Delcatty said.

Like that, Isabelle found herself walking next to the elegant Delcatty, with Arcanine looming silently behind them.

"So, you and Arcanine...?"

"Oh, we're mates. I know that look. Quite a size difference. I'm smaller than you and he's much taller than both of us. But he's the gentlest canine I've ever met, unlike that nasty Persian - no offence - who runs the bank. He and I used to be together, you see? He also lives nearby our hut. But he's all hiss and bite, and has no idea how to treat a lady. Arcanine obviously does, and pfew, such stamina."

Persian chuckled, grinning at Delcatty. Behind them, Arcanine gave a deep-throated chuckle, as well.

"How about you, lady Persian?" Arcanine asked.

"Me? I'm here with a Houndoom, called Dominic. I'm Isabelle, by the way. Dom sure keeps me busy, that's for sure. He has taken a Poochyena under his wing â€| ehm â€| paw? Protection, at least, and is now training the little cub. He's barely old enough to be away from his mother, though." She would not tell them that they have been humans, just yet

Della, the Delcatty, smiled wistfully. Isabelle had a feeling she'd like a cub of her own.

Delcatty and Arcanine's hut was in a place called the Energetic Forest, somewhere in the Eastern Forest. Three other neighbourhoods were around, but there was no time to check them out. This part of the forest was wonderfully pretty. The light shining through the trees' leaves gave this place a surreal look. All over the place, huts had been built. There was a really majestic looking hut where the Banker Persian lived. Nearby was a smallish hut with a ragged-looking female Persian and at least six Meowth. There were Stantler, Pikachu and Pichu, Skitty and Delcatty, and Mankey, Primeape, and Aipom.

"Persian really like it here. All the Persian around live here." Delcatty told her as Isabelle was greeted by the load of Meowth, who rubbed their little heads against Izzy's legs.

Arcanine and Delcatty's hut was bigger than her own, but Arcanine was a huge PokÃ©mon, so that worked. It was tastefully decorated with paw-print paintings, a massive bed that looked really comfortable, and even a table. They clearly have been living here longer than Isabelle has.

Dominic finally woke for real when Poochyena did. The small dog woke slowly at first, but after a moment it was like he realised he'd missed half the day. He sprung to his feet and ran toward the middle of the hut; Dominic, who'd served as his launching pad, growled grumpily.

"Don't run off," he warned Poochyena, but the small black hound grinned at him and did just that. Dominic permitted himself another grumble before rolling up and finding his feet. He loped outside to find Poochyena's bravery had taken almost halfway to the road, where he was standing and peering at Dom and Izzy's gate, wondering if crossing it might somehow mean he could never get home.

"How do you have so much energy, Pooch?"

"What? Because it's a quest day! I've gotta have energy for helping people and growing up big! Where we going today, huh? Do we have to wait for Miss Persian?"

While Dominic was a little better off than Izzy, he was sore and tired still. His muscles felt leaden and the fire in his belly, an ever-present warm feeling, was decidedly calm. A simmer, rather than the roaring tempest it had been when Skarmory was threatening his beloved. He didn't really care for a job, but at the same time he didn't really care for dealing with a Poochyena bounding around like a Magnemite pumped up on electricity overcharge.

"Miss Persian," he copied Poochyena's name for her, since it seemed

oddly fitting, "is already out and about her business. And I'm tired! Tell you what: I'll come and watch, but you're the only one doing a quest today. You can use the money to pay for all the food you've been eating."

Poochyena grinned wickedly. His tiny head bobbed enthusiastically, and the pair were off to Pelipper's Post Office. Dominic talked his overeager companion down from scaling another, even more treacherous mountain to investigate unknown shrieks from the summit. Instead they were to deliver an apple to a Sunkern in Tiny Woods, who'd forgotten to pack enough food for his trip.

To Poochyena, this was like a quest for the Holy Grail. "I'm gonna do it so well! I'll be in and out in no time, and I'll fend off all the wild Pokemon! Do you think there'll be a Houndoom there? Or maybe a Raichu! Or another Skarmory! I could take one now, don't you think, Dominic?" and on, and on, he boasted all the way to the woods. Dominic padded alongside his companion, smiling to himself.

At the beginning of their trip to Tiny Woods, the pair went together. The result was several Pidgey and Wurmple seen from the back, as they scampered away. Poochyena growled and roared at them bravely, but it was hardly necessary. So, after a while, Dominic sat down. Poochyena took a couple of steps forward, before his head snapped around to find out where the protective shadow had gone.

"No no, this is on you, Pup! If I hear you call I'll come, I'm not far away, but if I walk with you then nothing will even come near! Understand?" Poochyena's eyes were wide and frightened at the idea, but he drew his lips back, snarled, and nodded certainly.

"Yeah! I'll be back soon," he promised, before charging ahead in his familiar, bounding run. Dominic followed behind at his own leisurely pace, keeping an eye out without interfering. He needn't have worried; Poochyena was learning fast. His tackles were already strong, landing as hard as a small canine could easily manage. Once he grows up, they'd be fierce indeed, and already they were enough to push away the Pidgey eager to get at his apple delivery. The young pup even smelled out Sunkern himself, finding the Grass-type drinking dew from the underside of large ferns.

"Hey! Hey you!" Poochyena said as he came scampering forward. "I brought you an apple! Here!" He reached around and pulled it out of the pouch affixed to his side, then made the mistake of trying to talk with it clamped between his teeth. "Ith's a really gphood affle!"

Sunkern beamed brightly and rushed forward. "Oh my! Thank you so much, brave Poochyena, it's perfect! I'll tell all my friends about you."

Isabelle met up with the two males of her household at the Kecleon Shop. She was using the money she'd gotten from her Gummi quest in Mt Steel to purchase a better bed. She wanted an actual pillow, instead of that straw nest they were laying on right now.

With a lot of noise, Houndoom and Poochyena came walking from the quest board. Poochyena was leaping in joy, holding a tiny bag of coins in his maw, while Houndoom walked behind him, protecting Poochy from theft and looking amused at the same time. When they met up with

Persian, Houndoom rubbed his head against hers when they met up.

"Hey you. You're looking far easier on your feet. How do you feel?" A day of absence had made Dominic particularly affectionate, and beyond simply rubbing his head to hers, he nipped her neck and ultimately ended up standing against her, his body inviting hers to lean into it.

Meanwhile, Poochy was picking out a pillow for his own. He eventually chose one after hesitating between Ember Red or Houndoom Black. His choice was neither. He went for Mightyena Grey after 'Miss Persian' pointed her paw at it and whispering it reminded her of the Mightyena he'll one day be.

As Poochy proudly dragged his pillow home, Houndoom carried their new one in, while Persian pulled their old one out of their hut. Chansey would send someone to pick it up in the morning, for the orphan cubs under her care.

>Dominic slipped inside and moved across to stand near the new pillow. His eyes slid across to Persian, and he grinned narrowly. "I don't suppose we can make Pooch sleep outside yet, hm?"<p>

End  
file.